

Attention Dockets Management Branch:

2234 '95 MAY -3 1958

I am writing in support of a petition filed by United Poultry Concerns and the Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights which would eliminate the cruel practice of force molting layer hens. The docket number is 98P-0203/CP.

As a result of the stress and trauma caused by forced molting, hundreds of thousands of birds die a torturous death by starvation. Those who survive grow weak, shed all of their feathers, and lose up to 35% of their body weight. Furthermore, research has shown that forced molting significantly increases the frequency and severity of *Salmonella enteritidis* among hens.

Forced molting is so cruel that it was banned in Great Britain in 1987, and most European countries limit the length of food deprivation to a single day during a forced melt. The hideous conditions that force-molted hens endure warrant the elimination of this practice in the U.S. as well. Please, please stop the terrible pain and suffering of hens by eliminating the cruel practice of force molting layer hens. Thank you.

C1263

Sincerely,

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98P-0203

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